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They were quite expert acrobats, and became proficient in many ways. They seemed to delight in exhibiting their ability and practical jokes to an audience whether of birds or human beings. One thing in which they were said to have delighted, in captivity, was climbing a suspended string. They were very cleanly in their habits, and are said to have bathed regularly every day at a particular spot.

All facts concerning their former distribution and their habits as noted when they ranged north of the Ohio River, are very much desired.

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## NINTH CONGRESS OF THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION.

THE NINTH CONGRESS of the American Ornithologists' Union was held in the Library of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, Nov. 17-19, 1891, the President, Mr. D. G. Elliot, in the chair. In the absence of the Secretary, Mr. Sage, on account of illness, Mr. C. F. Batchelder was appointed Secretary *pro tem*. There were present during the session fourteen Active Members, and thirty-two Associate Members. The present membership of the Union, as given in the report of the Secretary, is as follows: Active Members, 47; Honorary Members, 22; Corresponding Members, 72; Associate Members, 352;—Total, 493, showing an increase of 28 for the year. During the year the Union has lost by death, one Honorary Member, Dr. August von Pelzeln of Vienna, Austria; one Active Member, Col. N. S. Goss, a member of the Council, of Topeka, Kansas; and one Associate Member, Dr. J. I. Northrop of New York City. The Treasurer's report exhibited the finances of the Union in good condition, there being no liabilities, and a balance in the Treasury.

Dr. Anton Reichenow, of Berlin, Germany, was elected an Honorary Member; Dr. Max Fürbringer of Amsterdam, Holland, Ernst Hartert of London, England, and Wm. V. Legge of Hobart Town, Tasmania, were elected Corresponding Members,

and ninety-six new members were added to the list of Associates. After considerable discussion it was voted not to elect any Active Members this year. On the motion for the election of officers a letter was read from Mr. Robert Ridgway, in which he declined to be a candidate for Vice-president. The officers elected were D. G. Elliot, President; Wm. Brewster and H. W. Henshaw, Vice-presidents; John H. Sage, Secretary; Wm. Dutcher, Treasurer. The vacancies in the Council, occasioned by the above election and the death of Col. Goss, were filled by the selection of R. Ridgway and C. F. Batchelder.

On call for reports of Standing Committees, Dr. Merriam on behalf of the Committee on Bird Measurements reported progress and asked for the continuance of the Committee, which was granted. Mr. G. B. Sennett, chairman of the Committee on Bird Protection, reported progress, and Mr. Brewster stated what had been done to protect the Terns on Muskeget Island during the past four years. Mr. Dutcher on behalf of the Committee for the Audubon Monument Fund, reported progress, and the committee was continued. No formal report was received from the Committee on Avian Anatomy and the Committee was continued.

The Amendments to the By-laws proposed at the Eighth Congress were then all adopted, and new amendments were referred to the next Congress. The Council subsequently provided for the publication of a new edition of the By-Laws and Rules, as revised to date.

Rule X of the By-Laws and Rules, relating to the Committee on Publications, was amended so as to make this Committee consist of the President, Secretary, Treasurer, and the Editors of 'The Auk,' *ex officio*. By a subsequent vote of the Union this Committee was relieved of the duty, formerly assigned it, of also acting as a Committee on the Nomenclature and Classification of North American Birds, in reference to the annual supplements to the Check-List, and a new Committee for this especial purpose was appointed, consisting of the following nine persons: Messrs. Allen, Brewster, Chapman, Cory, Coues, Elliot, Henshaw, Merriam, and Ridgway.

The rest of the session was devoted to the reading of scientific papers, of which the following is a list.

1. The Inheritance of Acquired Characters. President's Address. D. G. Elliot.

- \*2. The American Scoter. Gurdon Trumbull.
- 3. The Migrations in Chester County, South Carolina. L. M. Loomis.
- \*4. Summer Birds of the Crest of the Pennsylvania Alleghanies. J. Dwight, Jr.
- 5. Birds Attracted by the Rays of Liberty's Torch. J. Dwight, Jr.
- \*6. The Genus *Peucaea* as represented in Cooke County, Texas. George H. Ragsdale.
- 7. A Preliminary Study of the Grackles of the Subgenus *Quiscalus*. Frank M. Chapman.
- 8. Geographical Variation in the North American Forms of the Genus *Colaptes*. J. A. Allen.
- 9. The Intergradation of *Colaptes auratus* with *C. cafer*. J. A. Allen.
- 10. Suggestions regarding the Genesis of the North American Forms of *Colaptes*. J. A. Allen.
- \*11. List of Birds observed at Salamanca, Costa Rica, from March 15 to April 12, 1890. G. K. Cherrie,
- 12. Why the Mockingbird Left New Jersey.—A Geological Reason. Samuel Lockwood.
- \*13. Habits of the Black-bellied Plover in Massachusetts. George H. Mackay.
- \*14. Habits of the Eskimo Curlew in New England. George H. Mackay.
- 15. The Birds of the Pribylof Islands, Alaska. Illustrated by Lantern Slides. William Palmer.
- 16. Exhibition of Lantern slides representing Birds in Life. Contributed by Members.
- \*17. Cause of the Late Breeding of the American Goldfinch. Henry Hales.
- \*18. Notes on the Range and Habits of the Carolina Parakeet. Amos W. Butler.
- \*19. A List of Warblers found at Raleigh, North Carolina. C. S. Brimley.
- 20. A Probable Occurrence of the European Curlew (*Numenius arquatus*) on Long Island, N. Y. William Dutcher.
- 21. Some of the Results of the Death Valley Expedition. Dr. C. Hart Merriam.
- 22. On Protection of Birds. T. A. Schurr.
- \*23. Some Birds recently Added to the Collection of the New York State Museum. Wm. B. Marshall.

The exhibition of photographs of living birds, and nests *in situ* thrown on screens, was given in the lecture hall of the Museum. About eighty were shown, a marked advance from last year.

They proved of great interest, and it is hoped that such exhibitions will become a permanent feature of the annual meetings.

Resolutions were adopted tendering the thanks of the Union to the President and Trustees of the American Museum of Natural History for the courtesies extended to the Union; and to the Linnæan Society of New York for their hospitality shown to the Members during the Ninth Congress.

Through the kindness of Mr. D. G. Elliot, a selected series of drawings, by Wolf of London, were exhibited in the Library of the Museum during the session, these drawings being the originals of Mr. Elliot's 'Birds of North America,' and of his Monographs of the Grouse, Pheasants, etc.

It was voted that the Tenth Congress of the Union should be held in Washington, D. C., Nov. 15, 1892.

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## RECENT LITERATURE.

**The New Nuttall.\*** Thomas Nuttall's 'Manual of the Ornithology of the United States and Canada,' originally published in two volumes in 1832 and 1834, with a second edition of the first volume (Land Birds) in 1840, was a work so charmingly written and so true to nature that it has never ceased to win admiration and serve as an inspiration to bird lovers. While Nuttall was not deeply versed in the technicalities of ornithology, his bird biographies display a profound sympathy with his subject, and an intimate acquaintance with the ways of his beloved feathered associates of field and wood, acquired through a long period of varied and widely extended field experience, during his expeditions as a botanist and explorer to distant and then little known parts of the United States. In addition to his love of bird life and his keen powers of observation, he had the literary gift to portray in a simple yet fascinating way what he saw and heard, without being unduly sentimental or lapsing into exaggeration. In this rests the charm of Nuttall's 'Manual,' the republication of which has been till now delayed, though often seriously contemplated during the many years since it has practically been out of

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\* A | Popular Handbook | of the | Ornithology | of the United States and Canada, | Based on Nuttall's Manual. | By Montague Chamberlain. | [Vignette] Vol. I | The Land Birds. | [Vol. II. Game and Water Birds.] Boston: | Little, Brown and Company. | 1891. 2 vols. 8vo. pp. i-xlvi, 1-473, i-viii, 1-431, with 2 colored plates and numerous illustrations in the text.